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The Art Gallery

TAMPERING WITH ANTIQUITIES.

A SERIOUS CHARGE AGAINST THE DIRECTOR OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.



GREEK STATUE OF HOPE.

WHEN the forms of objects of antiquity have been defaced, and the sharp lines obliterated, there may still be sufficient character left for us to decide on the identity of particular objects. But when we attempt to restore them, their whole physiognomy is apt to change, and a source of dangerous error is introduced. To guard against a danger of this character, the greatest care is taken in European museums that all restorations shall be indicated. Alterations are made under the direction of learned archæologists, and we see on the pedestals of statues or figures, in the British Museum for instance, legends such as "the nose restored," "the thumb of the left hand remade," or whatever part of the object it may be that is not in the original state in which it was found. It is, indeed, a fundamental principle that no matter how or where a restoration is made, it must be indicated without reserve on the antique object. As an example of the importance of this, I will take a case chosen at random among thousands. In the Villa Mattei collection, Venuti describes a statue, which he represents as a "Sabine." But Visconti demonstrated that this same statue was originally an Egyptian priest, who carried a vase with both hands. As the vase and the head of the statue were wanting, the repairer put a woman's head on the neck, arranged the place where the vase originally figured, and gave the statue the appearance of a woman. I can only repeat, with Raoul Rochette, "that where a restoration is not indispensable, it is fatal, for it always must alter more or less the original character of the object." These remarks may serve as an introduction to this article, written with the sole object of giving as publicly as possible my opinion in regard to certain deceptive alterations and unintelligent restorations of some of the antiquities of the Cesnola collection—alterations and restorations made, according to the annual report of the museum, under the supervision of General di Cesnola himself.

During the summer of the year 1879, I saw, in examining a stone statuette of the Cesnola collection, that an object, intended to represent a mirror, had been added to this statuette by carving it in the stone. This discovery astonished me, as I could not imagine that any one would dare to dishonor such an interesting monument. As it was when I first saw it, this statuette represented to me Elpis, the Spes of the Romans, called by us Hope. But this mirror, if genuine, would indicate that the figure represented Aphrodite. Of course it might be more interesting if, having been found at Golgoi among the debris of the temple, and being Greek work, it could have raised the presumption that the worship of Aphrodite had continued at Golgoi in the Greek times. But the statuette was similar in posture to many others preserved in European museums, and was perceptibly different from figures carrying a flower close to the body and of Egyptian origin; so there was no proof that the statuette could be accepted as a Greek Aphrodite. By the addition of a mirror it was expected that all doubt should cease, and that the much desired goddess would be forthcoming. The excavations in the temple at Golgoi brought to light many representations of private individuals and various pagan divinities, but no unmistakable Greek Venus.

I now propose clearly to show that this statuette did not have a mirror at all originally, and that, if it is left in its present state, it can only become a puzzle to

future antiquarians. Briefly, the identification of this statuette with Hope has been suggested by me for the reasons that (1) the figure is represented in the posture of walking, (2) with one hand she draws up her garment so it may not encumber her in her walk, and (3) with the other hand she holds a flower. These three actions combined were chosen by the ancients to indicate Hope, sister of Sleep who suspends our griefs, and of Death who terminates our sufferings. From the very earliest times Hope was represented as holding up her gown and "passing by," in order to show that she is an elusive being, and always escapes when one thinks of laying hands on her. She holds a flower, a token of promise, and that flower is the lotus, an emblem of the Nile. (We know that the Nile expressed in the highest degree in the Egyptian myths the certitude and abun-



STATUETTE NO. 157.
FRONT VIEW.



STATUETTE NO. 157.
SIDE VIEW SHOWING MIRROR.

dance of all human goods.) In the European museums there are countless representations of Hope, dating from the most remote Etruscan and Egypto-Greek times down to the very close of the Pagan period, and the figure always preserved the same attributes until an anchor was added to these by the Christian religion. But it is not my task to give an exact classification to this figure, which has been described by antiquarians



STATUETTE NO. 230. SIMILAR TO NO. 157.

as representing Flora, Feronia, Diana, Venus, Priestess of Venus dancing, Ceres, Hope, etc., and that Visconti has demonstrated to be Elpis.

Some time after I discovered the alteration in the statuette, I thought it no more than right that the authorities of the museum should be made aware of what was going on, and, having met the gentleman who holds the official position second to that of director, I

apprised him of the circumstance. Later on he informed me that he could not believe that the fact was such as I had told him; but as his opinion was quite indifferent to me, and I was satisfied with the accomplishment of a duty, I dismissed the whole affair from my mind. A short time ago, however, the following correspondence took place, impelling me to court publicity in regard to this matter:

No. I.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Central Park, Fifth Avenue and Eighty-second Street.

Office of the Director,

NEW YORK, May 19, 1880.

SIR: It has been reported to me yesterday only that you have asserted that a mirror has been carved upon a stone statuette, now in this Museum, since its discovery in Cyprus. Is this true? If so, your charge brought against the officers and employés of this Museum is of such a serious character that I must have a most thorough investigation of it.

Waiting for your answer before I take further steps in this matter, I am, sir,

Yours truly,

L. P. DI CESNOLA,

Director Met. Museum of Art.

MR. GASTON FEUARDENT.

No. II.

30 LAFAYETTE PLACE, May 19, 1880.

SIR: In answer to your letter of to-day's date, I desire to say that I did mention that I considered that the mirror of the stone statuette had been carved upon it since its discovery in Cyprus. My reasons for saying so are the following:

1st. When I went to the Fourteenth Street Museum, and, thanks to the kindness of Mr. Hutchins, I was permitted to study the statuette, I could not see any mark of a mirror being held by the figure.

2d. Some months ago, when I called at the Museum, I saw upon a table the said statuette, there being an unmistakable mirror placed in her left hand; at the time I mention, the mirror and the place surrounding it were damp, and in examining carefully the object, it looked to me as if it had been recently "doctored," and that some fine dust, made from the same kind of material as the statuette, had been mixed up with some liquid and applied to that special place.

3d. In visiting the Museum again, two days ago, I was told that the mirror had been carved some months ago over some lines which were not considered to be sufficiently apparent.

You will see, sir, that the modern carving of the mirror prevents the research necessary to determine the age of the object, which would have been possible before the alteration. As to the charge you mention, I bring against the officers and employés of the Museum, it originates in your mind alone. In relation to your "taking further steps in this matter," I have no advice to give.

Yours truly,

GASTON L. FEUARDENT.

GENERAL L. P. DI CESNOLA,

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

No. III.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Central Park.

Office of the Director.

NEW YORK, May 21, 1880.

SIR: I am directed by General di Cesnola to acknowledge the receipt of your note of May 19th, and to state formally and clearly this:

1st. That the mirror on the statuette has always existed on it.

2d. That on the statuette being washed and cleaned the mirror appeared clearer than before.

3d. That it is utterly false that the repairer stated to you that he or anybody else carved the lines around the mirror to make it clearer.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

A. D. SAVAGE.

No. IV.

30 LAFAYETTE PLACE, June 15, 1880.

A. D. SAVAGE, Esq.—My Dear Sir: Since the day I gave you a verbal acknowledgment of the letter you wrote to me by desire of General di Cesnola on the 21st of May, I have taken notes which I intended to forward to you in answer to that letter; but I find that these notes have become so voluminous that they will find a more suitable place in a pamphlet than in a letter. To-day I will only answer the three points of your letter by saying:

1st. That the antiquity of the mirror dates from the year A.D. 1879.

2d. That the statuette did not require washing, as can be proved by the photographs taken from it.

3d. That you have taken the trouble of declaring "utterly false" a statement that I have not made.

Yours respectfully,

GASTON L. FEUARDENT.

It will be seen that General di Cesnola attaches great importance to the charge I bring; but instead of following him and making a charge against everybody in the museum, I will simply say that I do not hold any one responsible, save the person who ordered this deceptive restoration, and that I exempt from all blame the artisan who made it, if it was made by order.

My statement must be of a triple character:

1st. The mirror never existed on the statuette, as originally found.

2d. It is utterly impossible that any mirror could be found on such a figure.

3d. The mirror has been put there recently, and in a place and in a position where it never could have existed.



STATUE NO. 40. AS IT WAS FOUND.

objects of such magnitude in my private gallery were an encumbrance, especially as European museums were quite unanimous in declining to purchase. I knew the collection by heart, and always took a special interest in the statuette now in question. I had handled it hundreds of times and studied it very carefully; several photographs were taken of it, which prove that the statuette was perfectly clean, and did not require washing. I can state most positively that the side of the statuette, where to-day a mirror is found, was left unworked. This is generally the case in antiquities, where such parts are left unfinished as are not in view. No mirror or any appearance of one could have been traced on it at that time. In March, 1878, I was invited



STATUETTE NO. 768.

by the members of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society to read a paper before them, and having a predilection for this statuette, I chose it as one of my topics. Before writing the lecture, I went to the museum in Fourteenth Street. The case where the statuette lay was open, and the figure was placed in my hands. I compared it carefully with the description given of it in General di Cesnola's book, entitled "Cyprus," found the description correct, and went and wrote my paper, since published, in which I gave my reasons for considering the statuette a figure of Hope. Again, I can certify that in March, 1878, the statuette was unchanged, and that no mirror was carried by the figure.

2d. It is impossible that any mirror should have existed on the statuette. In the published account of the Cesnola collection by Johannes Doell, read December 12th, 1872, before the St. Petersburg Imperial Academy of Sciences, we see (Pl. I, No. 2) an illustration of this same statuette, and in the text (page 15) is the following minute description in German which has been carefully

translated: "Female figure (Pl. I, No. 2) in more than ordinary rich dress, with the left foot coming a little to the front. The right hand is raised in front of her breast, and holds perhaps a flower, the left hand, hanging down, holds a part of her dress. From the hair in front, which is covered with a small flat cap, three long curls are hanging downward from each side of her head over the shoulders. The ears are adorned with earrings; the neck is surrounded with a band of pearls on which an amulet is suspended. On each forearm is a bracelet. Besides that, from the left shoulder across to the right hip is drawn a broad band, the folds of which run lengthwise. The feet are covered with sandals. The figure is made a little carelessly. Under its base are two small heads, not visible in our illustration. The statue was broken above the ankle, but is otherwise in good condition. Height, 0.26m."

No mirror is mentioned.

In Di Cesnola's book, "Cyprus" (page 157), we read: "I must not omit to mention a statuette, probably of Venus, which has this peculiarity, that the base is supported on the heads of two caryatides, of which,



STATUE NO. 22. AS IT WAS FOUND (HEAD AND BODY SEPARATE).

however, only the heads remain. They are of an Egyptian character. The goddess is arrayed in a long robe, the ample folds of which she holds back with one hand, and displays her sandaled feet, while in the other hand she seems to hold a lotus flower. Three graceful tresses fall on either side of her neck, round which is a string of beads or pearls, with an amulet as pendant; a long veil, surmounted by a diadem, hangs from the back of her head."

The discoverer of the statuette, like Doell and myself, failed to see a mirror or any other object held in the left hand but the folds of the dress, although that important attribute would have justified the intimation that it was a statuette "probably of Venus." Sidney Colvin, who gives this statuette to a priestess of Venus, corrects somewhat his classification by placing a ? after his description in the list of plates. He would not certainly have placed that ? there had the statuette been carrying a mirror.

Aphrodite, or Venus, was not a Pelasgic divinity. Paphos, in Cyprus, was the first Greek town which worshipped the Astarte of the Phœnicians under the name of Aphrodite. The antique coins show us that the goddess was represented first by a simple conical stone. The Greeks soon after invented an Aphrodite with a different genealogy, and worshipped her as the goddess of love and beauty. Then she is generally

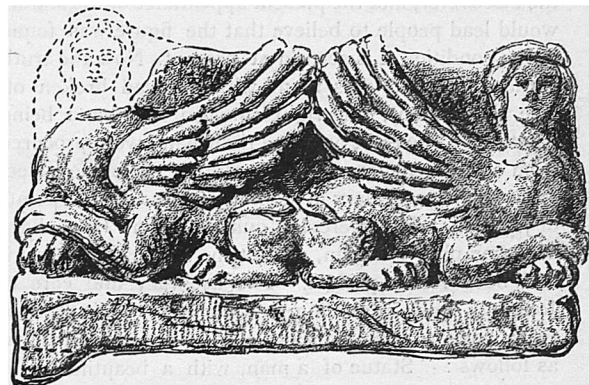
represented naked or semi-naked; and doves, roses, and other emblems of love were devoted to her. A mirror especially was given to her, so that she could see her beautiful image reflected in it. But between these two goddesses there is one to whom most of the clothed images of Venus belong, and that is Venus "Celestis," the goddess of generation, the myth of "the mother," who is always represented clothed, because, in worshipping her as symbolic of fecundity, the ancients did not deny her chastity. Fruits and fruitful animals were offered to her, and it was only in omitting the dress of the goddess that the Greeks deprived her of chaste maternal affection in exchange for sensual love, and she became the "Venus courtisane."

It must be understood that the above remarks are applied to representations of Aphrodite belonging to the same period as the Cesnola statuette, and that I do not pretend to deal at present with later images of the goddess, nor with the Roman Venus, representatives of whom are infinitely varied. By placing a mirror in the hand of the walking figure in the Cesnola collection, I am quite positive that a barbarous anachronism has been committed, and that a most interesting statuette has been changed into a conundrum.

3d. The mirror is in a place and position where it never could have existed. To explain this, I will say that the mirror, if it were possible on the statuette, would be such an important emblem, and would so characterize and identify the figure as that of Venus, that a prominent position would have been given to it, and it would never have been relegated to a place on the statue where it was the least sculptured, for none of the folds of the dress are indicated, and even the hand is not modelled on that side. Instead of carrying conspicuously an attribute which is to give her a name, like all representations of Venus having mirrors, the figure is made to carry it just as one might carry an umbrella, when not in use. As to the mirror placed there being of quite modern invention, I will repeat that in the summer of 1879 I had the statuette in my hands again, and at that time the paste placed over the mirror was still soft. With my nail I twice cut through the soft coating. I will say more, that any one who has any practical knowledge of antique statues will see at once the modern alteration, and that the repairer has not shown the same skill on



STATUE NO. 40. AS IT IS NOW.



SLAB NO. 35.

this statuette that he has displayed on many other objects. I suppose in this special case he had to create the mirror, while in most of the other cases he had only to adjust together parts of stone statues which were (or were not) destined to be so placed together. One word

more I would add in regard to the mirror being placed where it is. The back and left sides of the figure were the only ones from which photographs were not taken in Europe, so, although I will show presently that more than ordinary freedom has been taken with other objects of the collection, in this present case it would have been impossible to make the alteration at any other place on the statuette, without immediate detection. Finally, I again affirm that the conversation I mention in my letter of May 19th did take place as stated by me, I being told that the mirror was carved over some lines that were not considered sufficiently distinct. Before pointing out a few of the restorations in other specimens of the collection, I desire to call attention to an illustration of another statuette from Cyprus (No. 230 in the catalogue), in order to show that the same representation is found without caryatides, and that it bears no mirror, and to the initial illustration (p. 48) taken from a Roman coin of Claudius, on which is represented an early Greek statue of Hope. Both these illustrations will serve as objects of comparison.

Among the restorations alluded to are the following :

No. 40. Statue of a man. Doell describes the condition of the statue as follows: "The surface is altogether in a good condition, only a part of the right hand is broken. The head and the left forearm are wanting." The head, which has been placed on the statue, is of a much later style than the rest of the object, and of too large dimensions for the size of the figure; the neck has been made too long in order to counteract the effect produced by the head being too large. A left forearm, of which the hand holds a globe, has been also joined to the figure. The illustrations show the character of the restoration.

No. 754. Statuette of a youth. This has been too much retouched and a wrong head placed on it. When found it was in a poor state of preservation, and the head was wanting.

No. 768. A statuette representing a male figure crouching (illustrated). I do not know in what condition this figure was found, but if we compare it with the many others in the collection, and with a terracotta group from Cyprus that I have in my collection, it will be seen that figures in such a posture represent youths. The head of an old man is fixed on the shoulders of this figure; and it is important to know whether this head has been put on, as, if it really belongs to the figure, it upsets all the former classifications made of such objects.

No. 39. An Egyptian statue, very important for the dress and workmanship. After fixing the head, which was broken off, the left shoulder has been entirely remade, badly at that, and poorly decorated.

No. 22. A statue of a priest, the best statue of the Cesnola collection. In "Cyprus" we read (page 152) that "its preservation is perfect." That assertion of the discoverer, and the present appearance of the statue, would lead people to believe that the figure was found in the condition it is seen in at present. Now the truth is that this statue was found with its head broken off (see illustration), the right forearm and hand being wanting. The right arm and right hand were procured from a fragment from another statue, while the collection was in my gallery in London; but now the points of junction, which were left quite apparent then, have been completely hidden, so that the statue looks as if it had been found perfect. The accuracy and care of Johannes Doell in guiding archaeologists by his descriptions, appear in his remarks on this figure, translated as follows: "Statue of a man, with a beautiful curly beard (Pl. 9, No. 10). His forearms are stretched slightly forward; with his left hand he holds a small round box with cover, and a branch with leaves (only a small part of it preserved). In his right he has a flat dish, which rests on a support. The hair is curly, the forehead adorned with a wreath of flowers. The body is covered by an underdress hanging downward to the feet, and has small sleeves. An upper-dress full of

folds is drawn over the left shoulder and the left forearm. The feet are covered with shoes with thick soles. The surface is generally well preserved; the head was broken off. The right forearm from the elbow, and also the hand, the greatest part of the branch of leaves held in the left hand, and the point of the left foot, are wanting. Height, 1.78m."

No. 35. Two sphinxes back to back. This slab was found with all the upper part of the left sphinx wanting; now it is quite complete (see illustration), and the pieces joined to it seem to me to be of modern work.

There is still a long list of restorations to mention, but they would only fatigue the reader. I will merely say that the whole of the restorations can be described as belonging to the following different classes:

The fixing together of fragments which, to the best belief of the repairers, belonged to the original specimens.

The joining of antique fragments which never were meant to be put together, but are now worked up in order to give a better appearance to the collection.

The addition to a statuette of a mirror, which the figure did not have originally.



ORIGINAL SKETCH BY FREDERICK DIELMAN.

In conclusion, I desire to state that I have endeavored to place before the public some positive facts and some theories. It must be understood that I am only a dealer in antiquities, and not a "savant," so, while I can guarantee the exactitude of the facts in the case, I leave others to judge the value of the theories. But I will add, addressing those who take an interest in the Museum of Art: You have an invaluable collection of antiquities in this museum, although the specimens you possess cannot serve as art models. They are of the utmost importance for the history of the art and mythology of the ancients. They are enduring documents of stone, but they are valuable only when they are reliable. If restorations are to be made, let such restorations be properly indicated and labelled on the objects. Only by so doing will you preserve the collection and keep up its value. Antiquities, especially of this class, need not be "beautified;" they are only valuable because they teach us the customs and manners of the people who made them, and they must be absolutely trustworthy in the information they give. In fixing together fragments which are honestly believed to have belonged to each

other, good work may be done; though it is important to indicate the condition of the object when found, in order to prevent any possible misconception. But to amalgamate various pieces, strangers to each other, in order to complete an object, and not publicly to indicate it, is not only bad faith, but positive vandalism. To endeavor to increase interest in a collection by deceptive alterations or restorations can only be called a miscalculation, a profanation, or a fraud.

GASTON L. FEUARDENT.

FREDERICK DIELMAN.

AN artist who practises a very difficult style of genre painting, an illustrator who brings up to the task of magazine embellishment the large and true manner of the oil-painter—such is Frederick Dielman. Every year the Academy exhibitions produce some telling little canvas that is in some respects a cynosure, a sonnet of a picture so polished and condensed that it attracts immediate curiosity—a lady of fairy proportions in Albert

Dürer toque and Valois collar; a street-gamin whose character is interpreted from the philosophic and cultured stand-point. Each month the "editions de luxe" of American poetry contain some telling cartouches and vignettes that are like cabinet paintings for impasto and richness, in the place of the line-work and the Darley-like scratchiness of the old professional illustrator. Almost every month, too, the current fiction of the day, in the pages of the better magazines, is illustrated by the unctuous touch of this capable artist, working more like an historical painter than a flourisher of the lead-pencil. These works, whose massiveness and positiveness betray them to universal notice, and whose calculated effectiveness makes them especially hard to pass unseen, are found to bear in the corner the signature F. D. At the same time you seem to see that the mallet-hand is working on cherry-stones. A painter of large historical compositions must have controlled his hand for the oil-panel, a whole system of academic instruction appears to be lavished on the box-wood drawing.

Frederick Dielman, the signatory power whose autograph marks the noticeable works in question, is in fact one of those men of general and many-branched culture whose powers are condensed into their actual channel through various sluices, rather than painfully expanded from a meagre source. He might have been a man of letters; he might have been a geographer of Humboldt-like scope, if nature had not provided him with that sensitive and exquisite eye which naturally revels in color and analyzes it, and finds all poetry poor which cannot define the shades of beautiful hues, all analysis lacking in scientific expressiveness that cannot record the exact lights, shades, and colors of the object of interest.

He was brought up in a corps of the national force of topographical engineers, and spent his early manhood in laying out some of the grand road-lines and canal-routes which have opened the resources of Maryland and Virginia. At the moment when his natural faculty for this sort of science was positively proved, when his talent obtained the notice of his superiors, he gave up an assured future and a handsome salary for the doubtful path of art. He renounced science and a competency because they were in his grasp and too easy, and embraced painting because it seemed difficult and divine.

He was born in Hanover, and brought to this country in his seventh year. His education, except his art education, is entirely American. His relatives are people of position and influence in the South. When a boy, and destined by the family for practical avocations, he insisted on going off to study from the plaster casts brought over by the Latrobes and other influential Baltimoreans and arranged in an abortive "school;" this he managed to do without getting behind in his other studies. When but a youth he sketched the Capitol at